

Jon Thomas Rowland

a cop. I said go ahead, after you clean it up. Finally I told her that if she didn't clean it up I'd refuse to sell her any more contraband cigarettes out of the office. You can't do that, she shrieked. I told her that I certainly could. In fact I was going to write an entry in the common log telling everyone that she was cut off cigarettes from now on. Go away, she screamed. Just go away. All right, I said. No more cigarettes ever. I waited a few moments in the office, till I heard her familiar march. All right, she said. I'm ready to do it. Just a moment I said, when I'm ready. In the dining room she was very dramatic. I hadn't played seen such a Sarah Bernhardt performance since Frederick's great prat fall a few weeks ago. I handed her a dish clout, pointing at the mess on the floor. Do you want me to get down on my hands and knees like a dog, she demanded. I nodded.

I naturally decided to get Betty to bathe by offering her a few cigarettes. It worked beautifully. If I'd used any other means, there'd have been screaming, histrionics and hysteria. I didn't even have time for it all.

Adam could be mean because after I'd spent my morning doing these things, he'd arrive at 10 o'clock, hang up his "Roots" bag and put away his "Ray Ban" glasses, very methodically. He was studied in such methods. The point was to keep me waiting till he was ready, then find fault with my shift change. It wasn't hard because by then I'd already have spent two hours on Frederick (not Fred) and Gabriel's hygiene. I'd have gone up and down the dark-varnished